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ABSTRACT

Recent second language acquisition research has shown that language learners must interact with more competent speakers in order to learn to manage conversation. Such interaction is rare in second language classrooms, but dialogue journal writing, written interaction that shares some of the features of oral conversation, allows for conversational collaboration and encourages the learner to assume substantial responsibility for conversation management. A study analyzed the amount of responsibility students of English as a Second Language (ESL) assume for advancing and repairing the written conversation in dialogue journals. A procedure based on research in conversational analysis was developed to analyze the patterns of "giving" and "soliciting" in the journals of 12 adult ESL students and their native English speaking conversational partner. This quantitative analysis was supplemented by a qualitative interpretation of the journals of four students of similar linguistic proficiency. The quantitative results showed that the teacher's interaction with the students was consistent, whereas students' interactional patterns varied greatly. The findings suggest that the more active participants are those who make moderate use of each type of conversational "move." The qualitative analysis explains the great variation in level of conversational responsibility shown by four students of high linguistic proficiency. Sample dialogue journal excerpts are appended. (Author/MSE)

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CONVERSATION MANAGEMENT
IN THE DIALOGUE JOURNALS OF
ADULT ESL STUDENTS

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August 1989

ABSTRACT

Recent second language acquisition research has shown that language learners must interact with more competent speakers in order to learn to manage conversation. Such interaction is rare in second language classrooms, but dialogue journal writing -- written interaction which shares some of the features of oral conversation -- allows for conversational collaboration and encourages the learner to assume substantial responsibility for conversation management.

This study analyzed the amount of responsibility ESL students actually assume for advancing and repairing the written conversation. An analytic procedure based on previous research in conversational analysis was developed to analyze the patterns of "giving" and "soliciting" in the journals of twelve adult ESL students and their native-speaking conversation partner. This quantitative analysis was supplemented by a qualitative interpretation of the journals of four students of similar linguistic proficiency.

The quantitative analysis showed that the teacher's interaction with students was consistent, whereas students' interactional patterns varied greatly. The findings suggest that the more active participants are those who make moderate use of each move type. The qualitative analysis explains the great variation in level of conversational responsibility shown by four students of high linguistic proficiency.

Reciprocity in Dialogue Journal Discourse

All written and oral communication is collaborative, each participant making a series of choices based on what has come before and on the reactions, perceived or real, of the partner or audience. Although written communication differs from oral in several ways, it does require writer-reader interaction, as Martin Nystrand's (1986) analysis of "reciprocity" in writing has shown. One form of written communication which depends on reciprocity is the dialogue journal, a notebook or computer network in which a written conversation between two partners occurs over an extended period of time, each partner regularly taking a turn (writing an entry) and receiving a response. This form of written interaction has more in common with oral conversation than does most written communication and can be analyzed much as oral interaction is. This paper describes a study of dialogue journal discourse patterns which found considerable variation in the degree of reciprocity (shared conversational responsibility) in the journals of adult non-native speakers of English.

During the past decade, much of the work on the acquisition of first and second languages has focused on the critical role played by interaction between learner and interlocutor (Halliday, 1975; Long, 1983a; Wells, 1981). Both children learning their first language and non-native speakers learning their second in informal environments gain control of linguistic form and sociolinguistic norms through conversational interaction with more

competent speakers. Recent second language acquisition research suggests that interaction with a speaker more proficient than the learner is essential to language acquisition because it requires the learner and his or her partner to negotiate meaning. Many second language researchers agree that learning to use language appropriately in a social context depends on purposeful interaction which allows "comprehensible input" (that is, input slightly above the learner's current level of understanding) to be negotiated through conversational modification. Long (1983a) argues that it is such interactional modification (not merely native speakers' adjustment of linguistic input) that promotes successful second language acquisition. Although the more competent speaker usually assumes most of the responsibility for maintaining successful interaction (Scarcella & Higa, 1982), the learner must play some role in advancing and repairing the conversation.

Second language instruction, then, should provide opportunities for learners to participate in developing and sustaining conversation, negotiating meaning in the process (Long & Porter, 1985). However, classroom discourse has rarely promoted conversational modification, as empirical research of oral interaction between teachers and students has shown (Long, 1983b; Long & Sato, 1983). Rarely do teachers offer learners the opportunity to nominate topics for discussion, to request clarification of unclear messages, or to use a variety of language functions. One problem is that teachers and students often rely

on display questions, ones to which the questioner already knows the answer, rather than formulating and responding to referential and reflective questions (Brock, 1986). As a result, classroom discourse differs markedly from the interactions that occur in other settings. Students may learn to respond appropriately in the classroom but may not develop the conversational strategies necessary for participating in outside conversation.

To address this problem, dozens of "communicative" approaches and tasks have been introduced. As researchers have refined their understanding of what constitutes a communicative task, however, they have determined that not all tasks which claim to be communicative actually are. Truly communicative interaction requires that a partner elicit information unknown to him or her, a process which usually requires some sort of conversational modification to resolve problems or verify understanding. Long (1983b) distinguishes between one-way tasks, which do not require any negotiation of meaning or exchange of information unknown to one party, and two-way tasks, which do require participants to interact as "informational equals" (Long, 1983b, p. 221). Two-way tasks give students a "bargaining chip," information unavailable to the teacher (Pica & Long, 1986, p. 97), and so "compel the students' full-fledged participation" (Doughty & Pica, 1986, p. 321).

Dialogue journal writing qualifies as a two-way task, offering both partners the opportunity to exchange unknown information and to initiate conversational modification. It is thus one of many possible

means of implementing the kind of innovative methodology recommended by Pica and Long (1986). In order to understand how journal partners collaborate, recent dialogue journal research has analyzed a variety of teachers' and learners' interactional strategies: language functions such as thanking, complaining, and apologizing (Shuy, 1984), topic development (Gutstein, 1987), and patterns of questioning and responding (Kreeft, 1982, 1984). Kreeft's (1984) study of teacher questioning patterns in dialogue writing with non-native children found that almost none of the questions were display ones and that, although the teacher asked more questions than did the students, most of those questions were in response to topics initiated by the children. Unlike most classroom discourse, then, dialogue journal writing is not controlled by the teacher and does encourage two-way exchange of information, allowing learners to engage in extended, authentic interaction with a more linguistically proficient partner. At the same time, dialogue writing frees learners from the pressures and time constraints of oral interaction.

Given the apparent importance of conversational interaction for second language acquisition and the suitability of dialogue writing for L2 instruction, the discourse patterns of dialogue journal writing deserve extensive investigation. The study reported here analyzed the distribution of conversational "moves" available to both partners. The purpose of the investigation was to determine how fully each non-native speaker assumed responsibility for advancing and repairing the written conversation.

The subjects of this study were twelve adult (or mature adolescent) international students enrolled in an intensive English program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania's American Language Institute during the summer of 1985 (see Appendix A). Each subject engaged in dialogue journal writing with the same native-speaking partner, exchanging journals twice a week. The six advanced students carried on their written conversation for eight weeks, the six intermediate students for five. The written data consist of a total of 260 entries, 136 student and 124 teacher. Following data collection, a coding system was developed to analyze the interactional patterns of each pair. This coding system was refined and tested with the assistance of two colleagues with expertise in ESL methodology. Each of these two coders, along with the researcher, individually coded ten percent of the data base. The inter-coder reliability was determined to be .85, sufficiently high to allow the researcher to code the remaining data with confidence in the system.

The conceptual framework for the coding system was based on work in the structure of oral conversation by Gordon Wells (1981), Michael Long (1983), and others. Wells explains that discourse structure derives from each partner's choosing, from a variety of options, an appropriate way of continuing. Choices made in the paradigmatic dimension (within each turn) relate syntagmatically to other turns because many choices carry some degree of "prospectiveness" (expectation of a follow-up move) and so provide a "structural link" to other turns (p. 28). In Wells' view,

understanding the sequential structure of discourse depends on studying the interaction of the paradigmatic and syntagmatic dimensions, the individual choices made in the course of each move and the links between turns. Wells' system uses three types of "moves" (giving, soliciting, and acknowledging), reflecting "the basic dynamics of any social interaction," to explain the relationship between turns (p. 32). A "solicit" is any question or request and by nature carries a high degree of prospectiveness. A "give" is any statement of information, opinion, or volition and can either initiate or extend; it carries much less "prospective force" than a solicit, though more than an acknowledgment (p. 33). These moves can be combined in two basic ways to allow for two types of exchange: initiations and responses. Wells' "move" system was supplemented by Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) description of classroom discourse, which incorporates the concept of "acts." In Sinclair and Coulthard's system, a move, "the smallest free unit of discourse," is made up of a series of "acts" (p. 23). The analysis of "moves" and "acts" in the present study depends on Brown and Yule's (1983) notion of "topic framework," a discourse-level concept of "topic" as a set of elements. The final component of the system is Long's (1983) repair classification, consisting of three main types of repair initiation: clarification requests, confirmation requests, and comprehension checks. These analytic systems were combined and adapted to form a conceptual framework appropriate for analysis of dialogue journal writing. Appendix B illustrates the

paradigmatic dimension of dialogue journal discourse, Appendix C the syntagmatic dimension.

A dialogue journal conversation evolves as each partner makes a series of move choices, each move consisting of one or more acts. The choices made by one partner in the course of a turn (that is, the paradigmatic dimension of dialogue journal discourse) depend on the move choices made by the partner in the previous entry. Thus, the conversation consists of a series of entries which are syntagmatically related, each "give" or "solicit" move within an entry depending on what has come before. Each partner plays some role in advancing and repairing the conversation, though one partner may use a given move type much more frequently than the other; for example, one may often use questions to extend or refocus a topic, while the other primarily reacts or responds. Brown and Yule's (1983) notion of "topic framework" provided the basis for the conceptual framework of this study, ensuring that partners' roles would not be analyzed in a vacuum.

The study determined reciprocity (shared responsibility for conversation management) in the following "give" and "solicit" categories: Initiating Gives, Reacting Gives, Responding Gives, Initiating Solicits, Extending Solicits, and Repairing. Reciprocity could also be achieved in two repair subcategories and in two conversational features, "engaging" (using "you" to address the partner) and "embedding" (incorporating solicits in give moves). Reciprocity was said to be achieved in a given category when one partner used a move or feature at least fifty percent as often as the other. For example, a conversation in which 20% of one partner's total moves are initiating solicits, as compared to 15% of the

other's, is highly reciprocal in that category. A conversation in which 20% of one partner's moves and 10% of the other's are initiating solicits is still said to be reciprocal, though less so. A conversation in which 20% of one partner's moves, but only 5% of the other's, are initiating solicits is not reciprocal in that category, though it may be in others. The overall conversation is said to be more highly reciprocal when a majority of moves show reciprocity than when only a few show such sharing of responsibility for conversation management.

The analysis of central tendency revealed that, as a group, the twelve journals achieved reciprocity in seven of the ten categories. It further showed that the teacher tended to interact similarly with all students, modifying her moves with certain groups of students but rarely changing her interactional patterns substantially. Appendix D presents the reciprocity figures for all students and the teacher in each of the ten categories; in addition, figures are given for two groupings of students: high and low interactors and intermediate and advanced classes.

In the first of the ten categories, initiating gives, reciprocity was achieved in ten of the twelve journals. This category accounted for nearly half of all student moves and for one third of the teacher's, indicating that the power to determine the direction of the conversation rested primarily in the hands of the students. The advanced students did more initiating than the intermediate ones, but even the lowest interactors in this category spent well over one third of their moves on initiating gives.

In the initiating solicit category, the journals show a minimal degree of reciprocity, but there is a marked difference between low and high interactors and between the advanced and intermediate groups. Low initiators and intermediate students used very few solicits, while the teacher's soliciting remained essentially the same for all partners. The five high solicitors devoted a greater percentage of moves to initiating solicits than did the teacher (12.9% as compared to 10.6%), but the seven other students averaged only 2.7%.

The category which shows the greatest difference between students and teacher in conversational roles is "extending solicits." The teacher averaged 14.8% of total moves devoted to extending solicits, the students only 2.3%. Only one journal achieved reciprocity in this category. There was, in fact, an inverse relationship between teacher and student use of extending solicits: students who used an above average percentage of extending solicits received an average of 11.4% from the teacher, while those who used less than the average received 17.3%. The explanation is probably that the teacher saw less need to extend topics in this way when students themselves were doing so. When students did use extending solicits, it was usually to obtain needed information, whereas the teacher, not needing such information, evidently used extending solicits primarily as a tool for conversation management.

Students did a great deal more responding than did the teacher (19.6% of total moves as compared to 9%) because the teacher did a great

deal more soliciting than most students. As a result, only four journals achieved reciprocity in this category. The students' number of responding gives was affected both by how many solicits they received and by how many of them they chose to answer. As a whole, students responded to between 65% and 85% of the teacher's questions, while the teacher responded to nearly all of the students'.

Reacting gives (including acknowledgments of the partner's preceding message) accounted for about 30% of the teacher's moves and for about 20% of the students'. The four high reactors devoted the same percentage of moves to reacting gives as did the teacher. Regardless of a student's interactional patterns, it is important that a teacher react to a substantial number of the student's gives in order to advance the conversation; thus, the teacher's percentage of reacting gives varied by only 0.3%.

These five advancing moves together accounted for 98% of the teacher's moves and 99% of the students'. Several non-move features of these moves were also analyzed.

Embedding, a feature of soliciting rather than a move itself, is important to conversation management because, according to research by Peyton and Seyoum (1987), students tend to write more in response to solicits when those solicits are embedded in (accompanied by) teacher comments and to write less in response to solicits that are not attached to any give. Of the teacher's solicits, 79% were embedded ones, as compared to 73% of the students'. For both the intermediate and

advanced groups, the students' percentage of solicits which were embedded was nearly identical to the teacher's, although the low solicitors tended to receive more free solicits (sometimes 30% of the total) than did the high solicitors. The explanation may be that because most of these students were in the intermediate group and spent less time with this teacher than did the advanced students, the teacher may have had less shared context to draw on and so may have found it harder to identify or sustain topics of interest.

The second non-move feature analyzed was "engagement," the use of the pronoun "you" or other direct references to the partner. Engagement may promote successful interaction by letting one partner know that the other is aware of his or her presence and expects him or her to collaborate in managing the conversation. Solicits are by nature more likely to incorporate engagement than are gives because gives often involve the writer's experiences and opinions, whereas solicits often request information about the experiences and opinions of the partner. Engagement figures were determined on the basis of moves rather than acts: one instance of engagement in a move counted the same as three. As a whole, the journals did achieve reciprocity in this category, though for none of the student groupings was it extremely strong. Given the nature of dialogue journal solicits, even the low engagers found themselves compelled to engage often in the course of soliciting; however, the three lowest engagers were also low solicitors. These findings suggest that low engagement and low overall reciprocity (of which soliciting is a

key component) go hand in hand. The teacher's high soliciting rate (and, therefore, high engagement rate) with low solicitors may represent an effort to draw these students into more active participation.

One of the most interesting components of the journals' interactional patterns was the frequency and distribution of repair, even though it accounted for very few of the total moves (2% of the teacher's and 1% of the students'). Repair occurs whenever one partner interrupts conversation advancement to call the other's attention to a problem, usually a problem of meaning ("I didn't understand, I can't explain you how names work in my country") but occasionally of form ("Today, I made many mistakes in this Journal. Please excuse me!"). Repair can thus be defined as any modification of the interactional structure of a conversation in order to address a problem. In determining reciprocity, only clarification requests were considered, since that is the only form of repair used with any frequency by both teacher and students.

Of the few total moves devoted to repair, 64% were initiated by the teacher. Of the few instances of student-initiated repair, most occurred in the journal of one student, a native speaker of Spanish who frequently used comprehension checks such as "I don't know if you understand what I mean." The few repairs initiated by other students were primarily clarification requests such as, "Please explain to me what you mean of 'attitude.'"

The infrequency of most of the ESL students' repair initiation is consistent with the observations of researchers such as Varonis and Gass

(1985) that non-native speakers hesitate to seek conversational help from native speakers in oral conversation, possibly because their lack of linguistic proficiency leads to status inequality which in turn discourages negotiation of meaning. There may, however, be additional reasons, ones peculiar to dialogue journal discourse. Not only is understanding each utterance less crucial than in oral interaction, but dialogue journal partners have more time and options available for resolving problems before seeking the partner's help. For instance, the writer can reread the partner's entry, consult a dictionary, and reflect on the partner's meaning. Thus, most repair moves are likely to deal with major communication problems, and the teacher's decision to initiate repair may be related to the importance of the problem and to the partner's linguistic ability. In any case, just as in oral conversation, it is usually the native speaker who assumes most of the responsibility for negotiating meaning by initiating repair.

In most of the journals it was rare for students to initiate repair regardless of how fully they participated in other areas of conversation management. In fact, the students who introduced repair most often were less collaborative partners overall than those who did not. Lack of repair initiation by either or both parties is not likely to reduce the effectiveness of an otherwise successful conversation unless a number of comprehension problems go unaddressed. Following up a repair initiation, however, is important, suggesting a high level of commitment to the conversation. Of the 25 total instances of repair in the journals,

between 66% and 100% received follow-up. Because understanding all of the partner's utterances and answering all questions is not as critical in dialogue writing as in oral conversation, repair initiation in dialogue journal writing can be more sporadic and arbitrary, but ignoring the repairs that are initiated could adversely affect the progress of the interaction.

Dialogue writing allows non-native speakers to engage in negotiation of meaning but does not require them to juggle conversational roles deftly, as oral conversation often does. Although the negotiation of meaning thought to be essential for acquisition may not occur as frequently as in oral conversation, the opportunity for it that exists in dialogue writing may allow non-native speakers who hesitate to initiate repair in oral conversation to gain some experience in resolving communication problems in a less threatening situation.

The analysis of central tendency, then, revealed that reciprocity between the teacher and the students as a whole was achieved in several categories, but in other categories (notably "extending solicits") there was little sharing of conversational roles. Reciprocity was fairly high for two "give" categories (initiating gives and reacting gives), though not for responding gives. Reciprocity was achieved for initiating solicits though not for extending ones. Minimal reciprocity was achieved for repair initiation, even though repair moves accounted for only a small percentage of total moves.

One of the most important findings to emerge from the analysis of central tendency was that students readily assumed responsibility for topic initiation but not for topic extension. A related finding is that students rarely posed questions in the course of initiating topics and did so even less often in the course of reacting or responding. It may be that they saw soliciting, especially during topic extension, as a "teacher" strategy. Clearly, just as in oral conversation (Richards, 1980), the burden of extending topics in dialogue writing falls on the native speaker.

The analysis of student groups according to proficiency and degree of interactiveness suggests that linguistic proficiency may not be a reliable indicator of ability to participate fully in conversation management. Two of the advanced students often appeared in low-interaction groups (including soliciting and responding), and several intermediate students were relatively high interactors in categories such as soliciting and repair initiation.

An analysis of individual variation revealed that each pair of conversation partners developed a unique interactional pattern, the non-native speakers varying a great deal in the conversational roles they played and in the amount and kind of responsibility they assumed for conversation management. Of the ten categories in which reciprocity could be achieved, one pair achieved reciprocity in eight, three in six, and four in three. Two pairs achieved reciprocity in only two categories

and another in just one. Only one pair achieved reciprocity in all ten categories. Thus, while a few students used a variety of move types, some others relied heavily on one or two, requiring the partner to assume the majority of the responsibility for advancing and repairing the conversation.

Variations in interactional patterns can be illustrated by the following description of differences in responding. Shanaz, whose percentage of responding moves was highest (30.6% of total moves as compared to the student average of 19.6%), differed greatly in her use of responding gives from her son, Rajiv, whose percentage (13.9%) was second lowest. Shanaz responded to all of her partner's questions, whereas Rajiv responded to 86%, and responses accounted for only 14% of his total moves. Shanaz's detailed responses to each question may have prohibited her from experimenting with other move types; her journal achieved reciprocity in only three categories. Rajiv's journal achieved reciprocity in six categories, possibly because he responded more selectively and because his responses were less bound to his partner's questions than were Shanaz's. For example, following the teacher's request to let her know if he disagreed with any of her comments about the topic he had introduced (war), Rajiv explained at some length that "it doesn't suit a country to try to win a way by mean ways." He often used the teacher's questions as a starting point for pursuing his own ideas rather than as a blueprint for his conversation. Unlike his

mother, he did not allow responding to interfere much if at all with his own soliciting.

A similar difference exists in the reacting gives of two intermediate students, Tho and Rafid. Rafid devoted far more of his total moves to reacting than the student average (41.8% as compared to 19.7%) and Tho far fewer (9.3%). Neither used any solicits at all, so soliciting moves did not contribute to the discrepancy in their reacting rates. Both were rather passive partners, but Rafid was the more passive of the two. He not only responded to all teacher solicits (as did Tho) but also reacted to a majority (69.2%) of the teacher's comments. Rafid's reactions, though extending moves, were not effective in promoting the conversation. For example, he follows the teacher's comment about the summer heat in Washington, D.C. by saying, "I also agree with you. . . The weather is less hotter [here] than Washington, D.C., you're right." Such topic recycling without substantial development does little for conversation advancement. Tho's reactions, though short, added information more beneficial to the conversation. For example, he apologized for missing an entry because of his trip to Pittsburgh to take the TOEFL. After receiving the teacher's comment that she hoped he had done well, Tho reacted by saying, "Thank you for your hope that I did well in TOEFL. But I couldn't do well because I was very exciting when I arrived to the test center." He went on to explain that if he did not do well he would simply try again. This

reaction allowed his partner to comment on his positive attitude. Thus, the topic was refocused rather than merely rehashed. Tho was an infrequent reactor, but he used the move type well; Rafid's extensive reacting was more like repeating. The data suggest that the only participants who can handle a large amount of reacting effectively are those who supplement their reacting moves with more active moves such as extending solicits.

As these examples show, not all responses and reactions are equally effective in promoting conversation. The same can be said for most other moves and features as well. It appears that partners who use a move type in moderation are able to collaborate more because they are able to use a wider variety of moves.

The quantitative analyses of central tendency and individual variation in the twelve journals were supplemented by an in-depth qualitative analysis of the journals of four students in the advanced group. This qualitative analysis served to explain discrepancies between an impressionistic, holistic ranking of reciprocity (carried out before the coding system was developed) and the results of the quantitative analysis. The impressionistic ranking proved to be relatively accurate for fewer than half of the twelve subjects. Some journals emerged as much more reciprocal than predicted, others as much less so. Each of the four journals selected for qualitative analysis presented some particularly puzzling interactional riddle. Excerpts from each of these journals appear in Appendix E.

The most intriguing case is that of a 24-year-old Japanese student, Yasuhiro, whose Michigan score was low but whose journal was holistically ranked as most collaborative, although it achieved reciprocity in only six of the ten categories. The high holistic ranking was probably due to his frequent soliciting and to his prolific topic initiation, as well as to the sheer volume of his writing. In actuality, he did little to extend the conversation, preferring to initiate new topics rather than to react or respond. Though in some ways a highly interactive partner, Yasuhiro relied on a few move types, and his interactional patterns differed substantially from those of students whose journals were both more and less reciprocal. In addition to writing more than any other student, Yasuhiro's journal "voice" reflected a certain "communicative confidence." He "took" to the journal more readily than most students, being certain from the outset about its nature and purpose. On the surface, his concept of the journal seemed to coincide with the teacher's: he clearly saw it as a forum for posing genuine questions, and he obviously understood that it is the student's prerogative to nominate topics. In some ways, however, his concept of the journal may not have paralleled the teacher's so closely. Rather than seeing the ideal conversation as highly collaborative, he seemed to conceive of some moves (especially initiating gives and solicits) as "student" roles and of others (primarily extending gives and solicits) as "teacher" ones. His responses to an end-of-term questionnaire suggested that he wanted to control topic initiation and would have preferred that his partner confine

her role to commenting on his topics and answering his questions. Though an enthusiastic participant in dialogue journal conversation, Yasuhiro did not turn out to be the perfectly-rounded partner that he initially seemed.

One of the mysteries solved by the qualitative analysis was why the journal of the 23-year-old Korean woman, who earned high scores on the Michigan tests, turned out to be the least interactive of all twelve journals even though it was holistically ranked as moderately reciprocal. It seems that the two partners in this conversation needed the entire first half of the journal to get their bearings, to arrive at some understanding of how to share conversational responsibility. Hung Hwa evidently did not completely understand the purpose or nature of dialogue journal writing at the outset, and the teacher seems to have overwhelmed her by attempting to illustrate the variety of moves available. The teacher may have limited Hung Hwa's experimentation with move types by posing so many questions that Hung Hwa was forced to use primarily responding gives. However, Hung Hwa's manner of responding was creative, which may explain why her journal seemed more interactive than the analysis showed it to be. Unlike most others, she often used the "teacher" strategy of refocusing the topic framework. For example, answering the teacher's question about how long she had studied piano, she began, "In order to say about my learning in piano, maybe, I have to tell you about my mother." She then provides an explanation (see Appendix E) which in some ways is more a reaction than a response. Her responses were more useful in

promoting the conversation than those of students who provided bare-bones answers, yet still her journal was the least reciprocal of the twelve. In the second half of the journal, the teacher adjusted her patterns of giving and soliciting, and Hung Hwa appeared to better grasp the dynamics of the interaction, as can be seen in the excerpt from the end of the journal which appears in Appendix E. Thus, the partners' interaction did become somewhat more collaborative as the conversation progressed.

Another of the advanced students, Biswajit, scored extremely high on the Michigan tests but yet did not participate actively in managing the journal conversation, achieving reciprocity in only two categories. The main reason was this student's extremely infrequent use of solicits and engagement. The low degree of reciprocity may stem from Biswajit's ambivalence about writing in general and dialogue writing in particular. In an early entry he admitted that in his country one is expected to write detailed letters, something he "rearily" hated. In the journal, as in his other writing projects, he wrote as little as possible. His final journal comment clearly revealing his ambivalence, suggesting that he enjoys interacting with Americans but that writing is not his preferred vehicle of communication: "I am happy because there is no more writing. In the other hand, I am unhappy that there will be no one to correspond for my ideas."

The qualitative analysis also clarified why the student whose journal was most reciprocal had originally been ranked as only moderately so. This student, Rajan, collaborated with his partner to such an extent that his

journal achieved reciprocity in all ten categories. Rajan was the only student to use an appreciable number of extending solicits. His high level of collaboration apparently went unnoticed in the impressionistic ranking, unlike Yasuhiro's prolific initiation, which was evidently perceived as being more valuable for conversation advancement than it actually was because it suggests greater independence and initiative. Although Rajan did not use as many solicits as did Yasuhiro, a large percentage of those he did use were extending ones, whereas Yasuhiro's were nearly all initiating. Rajan says in his last entry that he gained confidence and fluency in the course of dialogue writing, which is supported by his increasing use of extending solicits. It may be that he was quicker than some students to become proficient at conversation management, that other students might have experimented with a wider variety of roles if the conversations had continued for several months.

The journal of each of these four case study subjects, then, turned out to be either more or less collaborative than the impressionistic ranking suggested, and the four varied considerably in the moves they used most. Yasuhiro was dubbed the "initiator" because of his delight in "running ahead" of his partner. Biswajit was called the "reporter," and Hung Hwa the "reactor." Rajan, who used all move types in moderation and was most versatile at conversation management, was dubbed the "collaborator." Each of the twelve subjects, in fact, developed

his or her own interactive "style." Clearly, it is not the student alone who determines the nature of the interaction, but, because the teacher's conversational roles remained fairly consistent across journals, it is safe to say that most of the variation was primarily due to the students' interactive patterns.

Variations in discourse patterns are probably due to a host of factors interacting in complex ways. One might expect to find some correlation between amount of prior oral communication experience and ability to collaborate, or perhaps some correlation between grammatical proficiency and reciprocity. The case study data, however, support the central tendency finding that linguistic proficiency, as measured by the Michigan Placement Test, does not predict reciprocity in advancing and repairing dialogue journal conversation. Some of the most collaborative participants, including Rajan, scored much lower on the Michigan test than did some of the more passive participants. Previous communicative experience in English may play some role in dialogue journal collaboration, although no clear cut evidence of this was found. Some of those whose journals achieved reciprocity in many categories had had considerable experience interacting with English speakers, yet so had a few whose journals did not often achieve reciprocity. And a subject whose journal was reciprocal in eight of the ten categories began his first entry by apologizing that he "hadn't learned English for nine years." The data suggest that no single background variable can account for or predict non-native speakers' collaborative patterns in dialogue journal writing.

As the findings of this study make clear, dialogue journal writing is the kind of two-way task that many second language researchers consider essential to the development of communicative competence. Some learners will not collaborate as actively as others, but all may make use of any conversational move, an opportunity they may not often get in the classroom or even in everyday oral conversation, where the pressures of the situation and the native speaker's willingness to direct the interaction may inhibit the non-native speaker's participation. For non-native speakers, dialogue journal writing offers not only an opportunity for exploring cultural issues and for practicing writing but for learning to manage conversation as well. As Hung Hwa observed in her last entry, "through these educational methods, we can improve our English abilities, I believe."

Wells (1981) and Nystrand (1986) see collaboration and reciprocity as features of oral and written discourse that should be studied extensively, not taken for granted. Analyses of communicative interaction such as the one reported here cannot yield a formula for successful collaboration, but they can certainly increase our appreciation of the complexities of communication. As many new studies are showing, the structure of dialogue journal writing is just as complex as that of oral conversation. Yet, as Staton (1983), the first researcher, suggests, dialogue writing may always elude researchers' attempts to uncover its inner workings.

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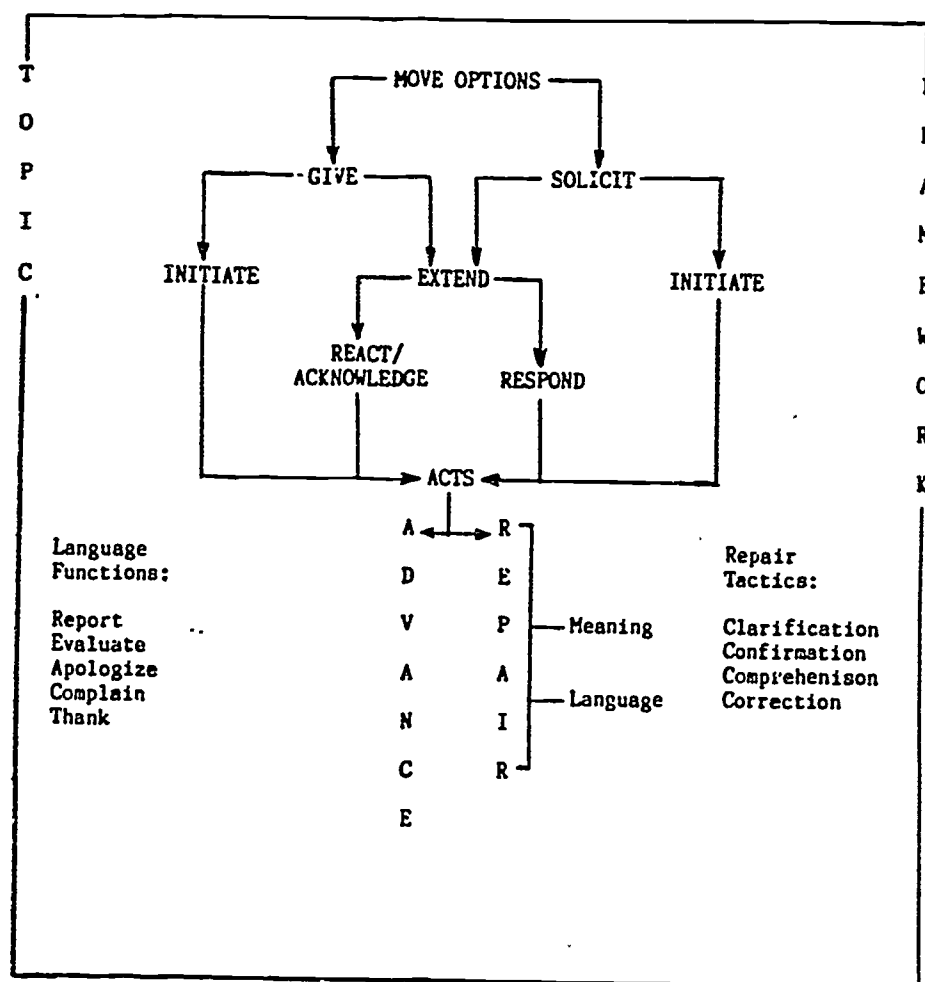
APPENDIX A

SUBJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Code Name	Age	Sex	ALI Group	L1	Michigan Test		Reciprocity (# Categories)
					Pre	Post	
Elena	16	F	INT	Spanish	61	77	3
Esteban	27	M	INT	Spanish	27	56	6
Lek	18	M	INT	Thai	68	67	3
Tho	24	M	INT	Thai	56	63	3
Rafid	18	M	INT	Urdu	59	74	2
Salim	27	M	INT	Arabic	56	66	8
Rajiv	15	M	ADV	Urdu	85	96	6
Shanaz	43	F	ADV	Urdu	75	87	3
Hung Hwa	23	F	ADV	Korean	80	89	1
Yasuhiro	24	M	ADV	Japanese	63	67	6
Rajan	32	M	ADV	Arabic	65	76	10
Biswajit	18	M	ADV	Tamil	89	86	2

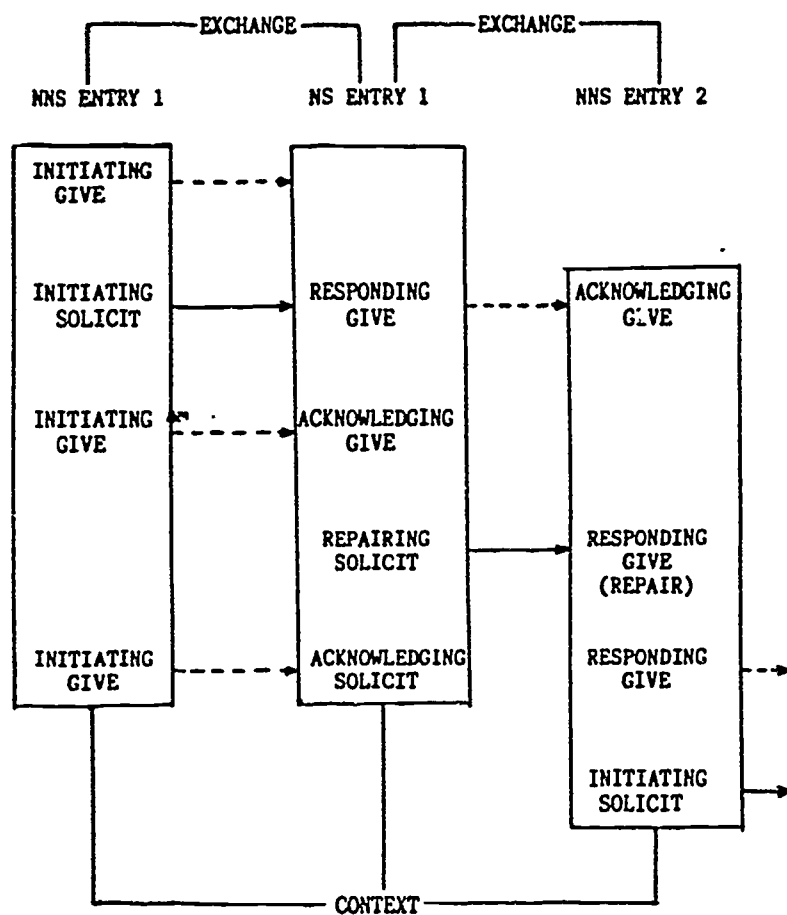
APPENDIX B

The Paradigmatic Dimension of Dialogue Journal Discourse:
Move/Act Options



Note. Language functions are not analyzed in the present study, but, as an important component of the paradigmatic dimension, are represented in the conceptual framework.

APPENDIX C

The Syntagmatic Dimension of Dialogue Journal Discourse

Notes. All gives and solicits are advancing moves except those labeled "repair."

Solid arrows indicate a high degree of prospectiveness (strong likelihood that a follow-up move will occur). Broken arrows indicate a possible but less likely follow-up move.

APPENDIX D STUDENT AND TEACHER RECIPROCITY FIGURES

Category	All Students	Interactors		ALI Group	
		Low	High	Inter.	Adv.
	S T	S T	S T	S T	S T

ADVANCING MOVES: PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS' TOTAL MOVES

INITI- ATING	49.4	39.0	58.1	41.0	56.0
	32.3	33.3	30.5	29.8	33.7
SOLICIT- ING (IN)	7.7	2.7	12.9	2.5	9.6
	10.9	11.1	10.6	11.4	11.0
EXTENDING SOLICITS	2.3	0.9	2.2	2.6	2.3
	14.8	7.8	11.2	13.0	16.6
RESPOND- ING	19.6	14.5	28.0	19.9	19.4
	9.0	13.0	4.2	4.7	11.5
REACT- ING	19.7	13.5	30.6	21.0	18.9
	31.7	31.8	31.5	32.7	31.1

FEATURES

EMBEDDED SOLICITS	79.0	83.3	82.4	73.3	80.7
	73.6	76.3	81.9	72.0	80.5
ENGAG- ING	42.5	31.0	50.7	44.0	41.0
	65.4	66.7	64.6	70.8	60.1

REPAIRING MOVES: PERCENT CARRIED OUT BY EACH PARTICIPANT GROUP

INITIATING REPAIR	36.0	0.0	36.0	29.0	5.0
	64.0	24.0	40.0	21.0	45.0
CLARIFI- CATION	38.5	0.0	32.0	30.7	7.6
	61.5	28.0	40.0	38.5	23.0
PARTNER REPAIRS FOLLOWED UP	68.7	100.0	70.0	80.0	83.3
	88.9	-	96.0	85.7	66.6

APPENDIX E Dialogue Journal Excerpts: Case Study Subjects

HUNG HWA

S-14 August 12

In my childhood, my hope was to be a pianist. Whenever I went to a concert, I envied the pianists. It is sad to be actualized for human dream.

Today, Yasuhiro heard the bad news of his country, Japan. A "JAL" airplane was crushed. And so, 524 people were sacrificed. It was a tragedy.

I can't still forget the accident of Korean Air that was shot by the U.S.S.R. At that time all of Korean people felt sad and their conduct aroused great indignation (U.S.S.R.) among the Korean people. The mere thought of it makes me shudder. At any sense, human life was esteemed. They, communists do by fair means or foul for their purposes. About what time they disappear from the earth!

T-14 August 18

Hello once more, Hung Hwa. I'm sorry to have been so long in responding to your last entry.

Yes, the JAL crash was a terrible tragedy. They say it's the worst (biggest) airplane disaster ever. I hadn't heard about it until I read your entry on Monday or Tuesday, but since then I've read several reports.

The Korean airline disaster was even more of a shock because of the incredible circumstances. We know that planes will sometimes crash due to mechanical or weather problems, but we would never expect that a civilian airliner would be shot down. We (the Americans) felt just as you did. Since there were many Americans on the plane, the incident strengthened the bond between our two countries, I think. Yes, it is a memory that makes us shudder. I'm sure it will be one of those tragedies that is remembered every year on September 1 (the anniversary).

I didn't know you (at one time) wanted to be a pianist. Did you take lessons when you were young? Do you play the piano pretty well? If you can play as well as you can sing, you are a very talented young lady!

I guess this will be my last entry. Could you tell me a little bit about what you think of the dialogue journal. How has it helped you? Is there anything about the writing or the taping that seemed difficult?

I've enjoyed having you as a student this summer. I hope everything will go well for you as you study for your career. Since you'll be staying at IUP, I will probably see you again. I hope so. And I hope you'll send me a note from time to time to keep in touch.

Good-bye, and best wishes. . .

S-15 August 20

In order to say about my learning in piano, maybe, I have to tell you about my mother. She always wants that we, three daughters including me, will be talented girls. Therefore, we have learned musical instruments -- piano, cello and violin -- since we were young -- 5 years old -- and Chinese calligraphy etc. She had to drop her education due to Korean War in 1950. She was a refugee. Maybe, she hopes to do all for us she couldn't do. She always sacrifices herself, I think.

Yes, this journal is the last one in the summer course. It was very helpful for me because in our country I didn't have experiences like this. To think in English and to write in English are very difficult for all foreigners. But, through these educational methods, we can improve our English abilities, I believe. I want to write a diary in English. Probably, I will do.

Tomorrow, I will complete my summer English course. For nine weeks I have learned a lot. I have met many good friends and teachers and so I am very happy. Most friends will leave here, but I will stay. It is very lucky to meet you again. Sometimes, I want to send a letter to you. Could you give me your address? Thank you.

I will miss all friends and I can't forget your help. Good luck!

BISWAJIT

S-12 August 2

Hello, Mrs. _____. This will be my first time going to Niagara falls. Going to the Canadian side is out of the question. Dr. Dan gave us good reasons. But I will be visiting the American side. Surely will be better than seeing nothing. I am not sure about the group which is coming separately. Hope they will make it.

Today nice thing happened to me when I was going home. I was in such a hurry that I didn't stop at the red lights. I thought that there was no one looking at me. I was surprised when I went few yards I heard some one saying (calling) stop, and when I look back it was a police car. I was nearly shocked. But still I took it up very easy. He told me "Hei guy if you do this again you will be charged \$52.50. I started laughing. I hope to take this as my last warning.

I hope this week end will be a good week end for me. Because I am planing to join the American family on Saturday.

T-12 August 7

Hi, Biswaj. So, you had an encounter with the law! Do you mean you rode your bicycle through a red light? At first I thought you meant you were walking, but that didn't make sense. I hope you told the policeman you were sorry before you started laughing! He might have given you a ticket just for that! I certainly hope you won't go through any more red lights! Take it easy!

S-13 August 14

Hellow Mrs _____. Today was a tiring day today. I walk to college today. My bicycle in not in good shape. After finishing the classes I hope to go to California. One more week to go. I am happy that I am finishing work. In the other hand I am sad that I am going to miss my friends alot. I rearly don't have much to write today. I will like to know what kind of Ice cream you like best and why?

YASUHIRO

S-9 July 24

Hello Mrs. _____! I am OK. I would like to tell you about Saturday night live. I knew that show three years ago, because my cuson (spelling?) who went to college of USA. He used to watch saturday night live, every weekend. He told me about that show. I wanted to watch that show in USA when he told me three years ago. And I watched it last weekend. That show was very funny, but sometimes I couldn't understand their jokes. I think they used to say slang and they have a lot of different kind of culture from my country. But their face are so funny and action is very strange. I'm getting understanding about that show. I enjoed it! I think American joke is very good. And many American loves joke. Anyway, the other day, my family called me in the morning. They had a strong rain and wind (How to say that in English) and roof of my summer house was blown by wind, but that's OK. My family were fine and that house has been fixed up already! But I am going to Iowa next month. Please tell me about tornado. I'm worring about it? Please tell me! Bye-bye! Take care!

T-9 July 25

Hi again! Yes, jokes in a second language are very hard to understand even for very proficient speakers. Understanding (or "getting") jokes requires a deep, first-hand knowledge of the culture. But some of the skits (plays) on Saturday Night Live don't involve much language (like that skit I referred to last time), so they can be funny for people who don't know the language at all, except that there may still be cultural differences which will get in the way.

Now I see why you asked me how to spell "tornado." I guess in your part of the world they have typhoons, which I think are similar except tornados occur only on land and have funnel-shaped clouds [drawing]. I guess typhoons are more like hurricanes. I've never experienced a tornado because they are rare in this part of the country (or wherever there are hills), although there were several in northwest Pennsylvania about two months ago (they occur in the spring) which killed nearly two dozen people. Tornados are more common in the mid-west (including Iowa, I'm afraid), but people there know what to do and will tell you. By the way, I noticed yesterday that there is a bulletin board about tornadoes on the first floor of Davis Hall. Anyway, I'm very glad no one in your family was hurt in the storm there. Every part of the world has its own kind of dangerous storms. There's no way to avoid all danger, so I don't think you should worry about going to Iowa -- just learn what to do in case there is a storm.

P.S. I asked my friend about Iowa, and she says there are not likely to be many tornadoes there because they are "between weather patterns." So don't worry too much! :

RAJAN

S-10 July 26

Hi.

I hope before I go back to my country I'll be able to see the craft fair. I like such fairs very much. I do often my shopping from Hills. I think this is the cheapest store in Indiana. I see many people to buy things from there. Some time I see people have a Hills card (it is like credit card) but I don't know what is this. May I ask you about this card? How people use it and how they get it.

Your exam will be finish after August 9. So will you go to Niagra falls with us or you would like to go Maryland.

I'll try to visit the bookshop which you mentioned. If I'll be able to go over there I'll write you about that how we found it.

I would like also to ask you about the marriages in United States. What are the custom.

T-10 July 30

Hello! Yes, I can explain about the Hills card because I have one too. It's a check-cashing card. If you apply for a card and the management approves your application, you can use the card for the privilege of writing a check rather than paying cash. It's different from a credit card because paying by check is still considered a cash payment. It's more convenient, though, because sometimes you buy more than you were planning to and don't have enough cash. Hills is the only department store I know of that has this kind of card. Most other stores have their own credit cards and/or will accept VISA or Master-Card, but Hills does not believe in providing credit. That's how they keep their prices so low. Some markets also provide check-cashing cards. I have one for Shop N Save. If you want to get a check-cashing card at Hills, just ask one of the cashiers. She will give you a form to fill out, and then you return it (probably to the Service Desk).

Yes, my exams will be over August 9. I would like to go to Niagara Falls because it's been at least 15 years since I was there, and I'm sure the trip will be a lot of fun. But the other night I was talking to my parents, and they want to get together that weekend -- I haven't seen them for at least a month, and they want to help me celebrate my birthday and (hopefully) passing my exams. So I guess I won't be able to go. But I think the ALI will have another picnic at the end of the term, and I'll be looking forward to that.

There's a lot to say about American weddings and marriages. Could you ask me several specific questions next time so I can tell you exactly the kinds of things you want to know.

S-11 July 31

Hello! To day I am not feeling well so I'll not write you too much. I have headache today. So next time I'll write you more. I have got a lot of information from you for which I am thankful of you. Now I would like to ask you about the American weddings and marriages. Where most of the people celebrate their marriages. Are they celebrate at home, hotels or in weddings halls. Are they invite their relatives and friends. Would you like to write me complete information about all the customs and traditions. If you like I can write you how people celebrate their marriages in Pakistan.